

# California State Journal of Medicine.

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DECEMBER, 1903.

## EDITORIAL NOTES.

The official Register and Directory of Physicians of California has been published by the State Society. It is sent free to members of component societies

**NOTICE!**  
**REGISTER.** only. The price to non-members is \$2.50, and copies may be had, while the edition lasts, by application to the publication office of the Society, 31 Post Street, San Francisco, California. In distributing the Register to members, the Trustees have decided to send to the secretary of each component society the number of copies required for his society, requesting the secretaries to see that members receive them. If you have not received your copy of the Register by the 15th of December, write to your county society secretary and ask him why. Remember that it will take a little time to get all these books distributed, so wait till the 15th before you make complaint. Please remember that no copies will be given free, except to members and exchanges, and that if you lose or destroy your copy you will have to pay \$2.50 for another. Owing to the rapid increase in membership of almost all component societies, many names of members who have become such recently are not printed in black face type. These additions are being noted and future editions of the Register will be corrected in this respect. If you are a member of a component society and your name is not printed in black type, please let us know, but do not blame us, for we are not responsible. We hope you will like the Register, and that you will read carefully pages 15, 23 and 25.

On November 17th, the Hon. Frank J. Murasky, of the Superior Court, handed down a very important decision in the suits **SUITS AGAINST THE EXAMINERS.** pending before him against the Board of Medical Examiners of this state. These suits involved various phases of the constitutionality of the act regulating the practice of medicine in California, under which act the Board of Examiners derive authority. The suits were brought by Von Tiedeman, Gardina and Herbin, all of whom were practicing illegally; the two last named had been rejected by the Board of Examiners. The decision handed down by Judge Murasky is very emphatic in affirming the absolute constitutionality of those portions of the law in question, and the suits against the Board were simply thrown out. Another suit, that of Gerino, has been taken before the Supreme Court of California on a writ of *habeas corpus*, and as such cases are disposed of as promptly as possible, this suit will probably be decided very shortly, after argument before the Court in bank; December 7th has been set for the hearing. This suit involves the constitutionality of another element of the law, and of course the decision of this Court will be final. The only other suit of importance remaining is that of Hodghead, representing a medical school, in which the constitutional right of the State Medical Societies to appoint or elect members of the Board, as authorized by the State Legislature when it enacted the law, is questioned. The contention is one that has been raised and decided elsewhere, and probably the constitutionality of the law in this, as in all the other points, will be affirmed. It begins to look as though all these legal difficulties will be cleared away before the first of the year, and that 1904 will commence with a well-cleared-up and defined law.

In the November issue, the JOURNAL published an article by Dr. Currie on Rats and their relation to the spread of contagious disease.

**RATS.** The JOURNAL is not aware of any similar article on this most important question, in a medical periodical, and therefore calls special attention to Dr. Currie's very valuable contribution to the subject. The public health authorities in charge of the work of cleaning up Chinatown are doing all that they can to get rid of the rats, but with comparatively little result. The rats seem to be, if anything, increasing in numbers, and every month specimens are found from which the bacillus pestis is isolated. During the month of October there were five deaths from plague; in November there were several more. A gentleman, who is in a position to form a close estimate, has advised us that, in his opinion, had

nothing been done toward the cleaning up of Chinatown, there would have been at least one hundred deaths from plague in the month of October, and many more in November. It is evident from Dr. Currie's paper that strong measures should be adopted looking toward the reduction in the rat supply of San Francisco. In the direction of cleaning up, disinfecting, improving sanitary conditions, etc., the authorities are doing splendid work and are to be highly commended. They are also doing what they can to stop the increase of rats, but their resources are very limited.

It will be seen from a careful reading of Dr. Currie's paper, that the most promising method of getting rid of rats is the payment

**BOUNTY ON RATS.** Obviously, if the bounty is a permanent thing, certain persons would very soon undertake the breeding of rats for the bounty. The period of gestation of the rat is forty days. Now suppose the bounty is offered for say forty or fifty days, and then discontinued for two months. It would probably be a week before anyone undertook the breeding of rats; forty days would elapse before they littered, and probably two weeks before they were of a proper size for offering for the bounty. But before they would thus be ready for the "market", the bounty would be withdrawn. It would hardly pay the breeder to feed his rats for two months in order to thus eventually get the small amount of bounty, and they would either be killed or turned loose. The plan need not, if adopted, necessitate the expenditure of a vast amount of money. If say ten cents bounty is offered for the first period of fifty days, and five or six cents for subsequent periods, after a lapse of suspended-bounty for two months between bounty-paying periods, probably a goodly reduction in the overabundant rat supply would be effected; an object greatly to be desired, in view of the continuance of infected rats.

The JOURNAL would bespeak your careful attention to the Table of Synonyms, page 416, which it publishes with additions from

**TABLE OF SYNONYMS.** month to month. The compilation of this table has required very hard and careful work, covering many weeks time, for the information there given is not easy, in most cases, to secure. Especially is this true in relation to the synthetics of German parentage. The various dye houses that have in the last few years undertaken the extensive manufacture and exploitation of remedies or materia medica products, have developed sundry curious business details that are as a rule un-

known to the physician. For instance, one manufacturer will put out a newly discovered and generally patented preparation having certain definite properties. Another concern will see that the first preparation or chemical is selling well, and it will then put out a similar preparation, adding, however, a few atoms of something, just enough not to infringe the patent rights of its competing dye house, nor to materially effect the action of the chemical. The result is that both can claim distinction in the matter of formula and therapeutic effect, while the fact remains that they are, to all intents, identical so far as any therapeutic value or action is concerned. The JOURNAL will be very glad to receive any suggestions in regard to this department, or any additions to the table of synonyms.

The *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* published an excellent article by Dr. Geo. M. Gould, on the "Ill Health of Francis Parkman," in which Dr. Gould demonstrated, to the satisfaction of any ordinary individual, the fact that Parkman's ill health was almost undoubtedly due to uncorrected eyestrain. The *Boston Journal* thought Dr. Gould somewhat of a "crank" on this subject of eyestrain, and editorially told him so, in the most polite of Bostonese. Dr. Gould, who is well and thoroughly conversant with Bostonese and sees quickly what its English equivalent is, did not like to be called a crank, and so "came back" at the *Boston M. and S. J.* But there remained somewhat more of Boston diction, and the journal in question again commented editorially on Dr. Gould's letter. (There seems to be lacking a sense of humor, somewhere, in the vicinity of Boston). "We must, therefore, reiterate our opinion that Dr. Gould is an extremist in his advocacy of a theory which *unquestionably stands on a basis of scientific fact*". (Italics ours). Dr. Gould ought certainly to be satisfied with that; in the course of time probably Boston will advocate a theory that has a "basis of scientific fact." Perhaps the thing that rankles is the possibility that the population of Boston may not have been quite accurately refracted, and that a change of glasses may be necessary!

The temptation, ably resisted, was strong upon us to write "the Fool Killer", instead of the Toy Pistol. Since the publication in the *Journal A. M. A.*, of a long and masterly summary of the deaths from tetanus due to the 4th-of-July-toy-pistol accidents, the medical press of the country has had a spasm. Editorial after editorial has been written, and resolutions have been passed; we publish elsewhere in this number of the JOURNAL (at special request), a sample set of resolutions.